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FM AIT TAIPEI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 000546

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/21/2031

TAGS: ECON IO PREL TW

SUBJECT: TAIWAN RE-REQUESTS ASSISTANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Classified By: AIT Acting Director David Keegan,  
Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a February 21 meeting Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) appealed to AIT ADIR for U.S. help in upgrading and systematizing the conditions for its participation in WHO and in reinforcing with 2006 APEC host Vietnam the importance of providing Taiwan with treatment equivalent to that provided to any other APEC member. MOFA also indicated that the visit of its Vice Minister to Washington for "bilateral consultations on Taiwan's strategies for WHO participation" would be delayed, and briefly discussed its desire for a U.S.-Taiwan FTA and its priorities with the EU. Action request para 4 and para 7. End summary.

WHO

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¶2. (C) MOFA Department of International Organizations Director General John Chen discussed with AIT ADIR Keegan Taiwan's concerns about the nature of its current participation in WHO. Chen recognized that formal observer status would be difficult to achieve in the near future. Within the existing ad hoc arrangement for Taiwan's substantive participation in WHO, Chen identified three major problems that he requested U.S. help in addressing: First, since Taiwan was required to apply for WHO approval prior to every WHO meeting it wished to attend, there was often little lead time between the approval notice and the start of the meeting, making logistics and preparations difficult. This was compounded by the fact that the WHO secretariat has no process for informing Taiwan of upcoming events. Second, Chen noted that there was a lack of transparency and standards in the approval process, which made it difficult to predict whether Taiwan would be allowed to attend any particular meeting. This further compounded the difficulty caused by the short lead time. Third, because of the ad hoc nature of Taiwan's participation, it was sometimes left out of actions that followed-up on the meetings.

¶3. (C) DG Chen acknowledged that Taiwan had participated in 12 (of 16) WHO meetings since the ad hoc formula was developed last year, but he insisted the process needed to be made more systematic, transparent, and with better follow-up to the meetings. He said Taiwan was trying to make these points with the EU and with Japan as well, although he acknowledged ADIR's suggestion that maintaining the EU arms embargo was a much higher priority issue in Taiwan's relations with the EU. Chen also noted that MOFA VM Michael Kau had postponed his plans to lead a delegation to the U.S. to discuss Taiwan's WHO participation. He now proposes to travel to Washington in mid-March.

¶4. (C) Action request: AIT requests talking points regarding

the possibility of VM Kau leading a delegation to Washington to discuss strategies for WHO participation.

APEC

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¶5. (C) DG Chen also expressed concern about Vietnam's hosting APEC 2006. He said Taiwan was worried that Vietnam would not be able to stand up to political pressure from China and would exclude Taiwan from some APEC meetings or otherwise limit its participation. He said MOFA's informants said this was not related to the subject matter of the meeting (i.e., that Taiwan should not attend meetings touching on security issues), but was the result of China's broader strategy of trying to restrict Taiwan's international dealings and isolate it from other governments. Taiwan has been told that two emissaries from Beijing had recently conveyed a request to Hanoi to limit Taiwan's participation in APEC. Chen said that according to MOFA's informant, Hanoi wanted the U.S. to deliver a message on the importance of providing equal treatment to all APEC members in order to help it resist China's pressure. (Note: While MOFA refused to clarify who their informant was, it was clear from the context that it was a Vietnam government official. End note.)

¶6. (C) Comment: In the past year, there have been several attempts by China to exclude Taiwan from events which do not require statehood and to which Taiwan has been invited, such as APEC events. AIT believes that in order to be consistent with the U.S. policy of supporting Taiwan's participation in international organizations that do not require statehood, when pressure from China forces the host of an event to exclude Taiwan, the U.S. should support relocating the event to a neutral location where all invitees are welcome, even if

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this means some invitees (i.e., China, Hong Kong, and Macau) may boycott the meeting.

¶7. (C) Action request: AIT believes it is important for U.S. senior officials to remind host government officials and other APEC economies of the equality of all APEC members in terms of rights and obligations within APEC.

KEEGAN